

these regulations. A defined benefit excess plan or offset plan that does not satisfy section 401(l) with respect to all plan years beginning on or after the effective date of these regulations may, under the rules of § 1.401(a)(4)-13(c) (and § 1.401(a)(4)-13(d), if applicable), satisfy section 401(l) for plan years beginning after a fresh-start date by satisfying the applicable requirements of §§ 1.401(l)-1 through 1.401(l)-5 after the fresh-start date.

(c) *Compliance during transition period.* For plan years beginning on or after January 1, 1989, and before the effective date of these regulations, as set forth in paragraph (b) of this section, a plan must be operated in accordance with a reasonable, good faith interpretation of section 401(l). Whether a plan is operated in accordance with a reasonable, good faith interpretation of section 401(l) will generally be determined based on all of the relevant facts and circumstances, including the extent to which an employer has resolved unclear issues in its favor. A plan will be deemed to be operated in accordance with a reasonable, good faith interpretation of section 401(l) if it is operated in accordance with the terms of §§ 1.401(l)-1 through 1.401(l)-5.

[T.D. 8486, 58 FR 46835, Sept. 3, 1993]

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[Reserved]

§ 1.401(m)-5 *Definitions.*

[T.D. 9169, 69 FR 78184, Dec. 29, 2004, as amended by T.D. 9237, 71 FR 10, Jan. 3, 2006; T.D. 9447, 74 FR 8210, Feb. 24, 2009]

**§ 1.401(m)-1 Employee contributions and matching contributions.**

(a) *General nondiscrimination rules*—(1) *Nondiscriminatory amount of contributions*—(i) *Exclusive means of amounts testing.* A defined contribution plan does not satisfy section 401(a) for a plan year unless the amount of employee contributions and matching contributions to the plan for the plan

year satisfies section 401(a)(4). The amount of employee contributions and matching contributions under a plan satisfies the requirements of section 401(a)(4) with respect to amounts if and only if the amount of employee contributions and matching contributions satisfies the nondiscrimination test of section 401(m) under paragraph (b) of this section and the plan satisfies the additional requirements of paragraph (c) of this section. See § 1.401(a)(4)-1(b)(2)(ii)(B).

(ii) *Testing benefits, rights and features.* A plan that provides for employee contributions or matching contributions must satisfy the requirements of section 401(a)(4) relating to benefits, rights and features in addition to the requirement regarding amounts described in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section. For example, the right to make each level of employee contributions and the right to each level of matching contributions under the plan are benefits, rights or features subject to the requirements of section 401(a)(4). See § 1.401(a)(4)-4(e)(3)(i) and (iii)(F) through (G).

(2) *Matching contributions*—(i) *In general.* For purposes of section 401(m), this section and §§ 1.401(m)-2 through 1.401(m)-5, matching contributions are—

(A) Any employer contribution (including a contribution made at the employer's discretion) to a defined contribution plan on account of an employee contribution to a plan maintained by the employer;

(B) Any employer contribution (including a contribution made at the employer's discretion) to a defined contribution plan on account of an elective deferral; and

(C) Any forfeiture allocated on the basis of employee contributions, matching contributions, or elective deferrals.

(ii) *Employer contributions made on account of an employee contribution or elective deferral.* Whether an employer contribution is made on account of an employee contribution or an elective deferral is determined on the basis of all the relevant facts and circumstances, including the relationship between the employer contribution and employee actions outside the plan. An employer